G. Cayford.

OUR HOSPITALS,

AND THE MEN IN THEM.

BY

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In the following paper, a record of a visit to some of our national army hospitals, I propose to speak: —

1. *Of Charities connected with, and consequent upon, War, which are to be found connected with all Wars of all civilized Nations.*

2. *Of Charities extraordinary and peculiar to our own War.*

3. *Of Men in the Hospital.*

1. Under the first head comes the *Hospital* itself, — the only charity, if it properly can be called such, recognized among civilized nations, toward its soldiers in time of war.

Let me say at once, that I found the hospitals and hospital system almost infinitely better than I had supposed. The stories with which our Northern ears have been so filled had led me to suppose that I should see want, abuse, unnecessary suffering, palpably, on the surface everywhere. I soon came to the conclusion that, throwing out a few extreme cases, the things complained of were incident to the setting in motion of such an immense work, the material for which, as well as the laborers in it, had largely to be extemporized, and must necessarily be, through all its earlier stages, largely a thing of experiment. It was very evident that a right spirit was at the bottom of things, and a very determined spirit. Incompetent and bad men there had been, incompetent and

bad men, no doubt, there still were; but incompetent and bad men are being rapidly removed, and the best men only put in their place. At the commencement of the war, the head of the medical staff was an utterly incompetent man. In the determination that the right man should be in the place, eighty-two names on the list for promotion were passed, — a thing probably unknown in the annals of any military service, — and a man appointed who seems to be *the* man. So it is all through; and at this very moment a new board of inspectors, at the suggestion, by the appointment, and under the direction of the Sanitary Commission, composed in part of some of our own more prominent physicians and surgeons, is commencing a six months' tour of survey through all the hospitals, with the hearty approbation and assistance of government. I believe everything will be done that can be done, as soon as it can be done. Even then, however, it will not be possible to prevent the terrible agonies inseparable from war, — perhaps not possible to prevent all delay, or even abuse.

Another thing. The complaints, as a rule, come from those who have least cause for complaint. It is in hospitals just as it is in life. Said the steward of a hospital, — handing me a bill of fare for every day in the week that would be considered luxurious in most of our homes, and adding, that the surgeon in charge did not restrict himself even to that, but ordered anything a capricious appetite might suggest, if it seemed to him likely to answer its purpose, — "But there are some men here who will growl, if they have turkey once, because they cannot have it three times every day." I do not doubt there has been bad management, insufficient and improper food, as well as other things, in the past, while I feel sure that these have been much exaggerated by statements and letters of complaining men, — men whose nature it is to complain, men who have never considered what were the limits of possibility under the contingency, as well as by men made unreasonable by suffering and homesickness, —

homesickness, — that terrible disease which stalks through camp and hospital, which medicine, surgery, or diet cannot reach, but which takes the manhood, almost the honor, out of its victim.

The *hospitals* are either buildings, stores, churches, taken for the purpose, barracks originally intended for troops, or buildings specially erected as hospitals.

1. Of buildings taken for the purpose, the large warehouses seemed to me the best, especially where a large well, opening from floor to skylight, secured a constant circulation of air, without any reference to windows. They can never, however, be made convenient or economical in time and labor, and must be most difficult to warm.

2. Next to these come hotels and ordinary houses. However admirable these might be for single patients, a glance shows you how imperfectly they answer where many must be put into each room. Thorough ventilation — almost the alpha and omega of hospital comfort and safety — becomes impossible. The admirable arrangements for many kinds of work necessary, and a certain snugness which larger rooms never get, are vitiated by this one imperative and always palpable want. I must say, however, that the marvel grew with me, that, with such disadvantage to contend against, the air was kept as pure as it was.

The United States General Hospital, Camden Street, Baltimore, of which Rev. C. J. Bowen is the excellent and efficient chaplain, occupies all the houses on both sides of the street, for the length of a square. Among these is a hotel, of whose superior arrangements every advantage is taken. By means of an elevator in the entry near the door, the badly sick or wounded are lifted at once to the operating-room, or the story or ward desired. The kitchen, the old smoking and reading and dining rooms, are used to advantage for their original purposes. The street is closed at each end, and a guard stationed, so that no vehicle passes, and quiet is secured. The sidewalks are thus left for the promenading

or sitting in the sun of those able to be about, and every form of convalescing sickness or wound will greet you at every threshold. In these various houses are nearly one thousand patients.

I visited this hospital two or three times. There are drawbacks to its being your *beau ideal* of a hospital, yet there was much to admire and commend; and you felt that, while there could not be satisfactory ventilation or arrangement and economy of room, such wants were largely compensated by the appearance of surgeons, matrons, and nurses, and the genial manner and hearty kindliness of the worthy chaplain. The Second Society in Baltimore being for the present abandoned, — a large number of its members having chosen the Secession side, — Mr. Bowen is now simply chaplain, an office he holds directly from the United States government. His time, his thought, his heart, are given to his work; and as I went from house to house, from ward to ward, from bed to bed, as I watched the effect of his coming and his greeting, as I saw how quietly he moved through a complication of detail, I could not but feel how wisely government had bestowed the office. Here was the terribly wounded Rebel side by side with the as terribly wounded Federal, the one spoken to, treated in all ways kindly as the other, and I will say answering pleasantly, if briefly, and as if conscious of favor received. I entered the operating-room, and looked upon the bed on which my friend said he had seen three men lately die under the knife. I saw life ebbing unconsciously away, while there lay near unread letters with tenderest words from home, never to bless it. I talked with one from whose side had just been carried the body of a companion who had died in the night. Yet with all these things about them, with so much in their own condition and in their future dark and sometimes hopeless, I saw nothing you could justly call depression. I heard only cheery words, and one general expression of gratitude for kind care. Some days there are three and five burials One morning Mr. Bowen

said to me, "I must leave you a few minutes." And on his return said, "I have just had a service over a poor fellow, with only the undertaker and a black man present. This man was a discharged soldier, so there was no military escort, as is usual. His father had been with him till the day before, but, finding that his son must die, had left him, as he supposed he should so escape the charges of removal and burial. The most touching thing," he added, "in connection with this duty, are the letters of inquiry which come afterward from relatives and friends." An association of ladies, as well as many benevolent gentlemen, are interested in, and laboring for, this hospital, only one of many in the city; and I am satisfied nothing will be left undone that faith, charity, patriotism, can devise, or time and money procure, to alleviate the pangs of those who are brought within its walls. The chaplain's special religious service is on Sunday afternoon. He has an outside audience, the remnant of his now divided parish, as well as the convalescents, in the hotel dining-room, and two excellent Methodist choirs alternate in singing, not only at the service, but in the wards, to the great delight and cheering and benefit of the patients.

3. *The Churches.* A church cannot be made a good hospital. The poorest ventilated hospitals I saw were churches. They are bad enough in that respect when kept to their legitimate use. The floors are laid over the pews; they have not the *feel*, the firmness, of a genuine floor, and are noisy from having such a hollow space under them. The beds under the galleries are dark, and near the ceiling; those in the galleries are no better, all the fresh air coming in over the heads of the sick, while some of the essential appointments are not to be found in, or extemporized out of, the ordinary church premises. I felt here the painful publicity of the hospital more than elsewhere, while the only genuine advantage to the soldier seemed to be the presence of the organ. "Ah," I said, to the surgeon of the Church Hospitals, consisting of the Unitarian Church and another not far off, "I see you keep the organ.

I hope you give the poor fellows a tune sometimes." "Yes indeed," was the reply. "They depend on it, and it does them great good." This surgeon, a Philadelphian, was a noble specimen of his class; but it seemed strange to find him in the pulpit where I had once preached, which he had fitted up into an admirable apothecary's shop. May his practice be more blessed than I fear my preaching was!

4. *The Barracks*, being built for a different purpose, and none too admirably for that, fail again in this important matter of air, or rather air in proper times, quantities, and places, and I do not see how they are kept warm in winter. The most imposing of these are the Carver Barracks, originally used as the winter quarters of Fitz-John Porter's division, occupying a huge, desolate square of several acres, from which every vestige of grass has been long since trodden. They are, including some hospital tents, ninety-three in number, and are calculated for two thousand patients. An exceedingly cursory survey did not leave so favorable an impression as many others did, which I attributed in part to the size of the establishment, in part to something in the character of the men, in part to the absence of women; but it was largely owing, I am satisfied, to the inevitable stamp which institutions, as well as men, come to get from their habit and life. This had been a pretty rough affair, — surgeons and nurses, — but was getting into a more satisfactory condition. Since the time of my visit, it has rapidly improved, and now ranks among the best.

5. *Buildings erected for the purpose.* "I am going to show you," said a friend at home in the whole matter, "the best hospital, — the one which is our ideal, up to which we mean to bring all." This best hospital is that in Armory Square,* Washington, consisting of eleven pavilions, ranged side by side, and joined in the middle by a covered passage-

* It should in justice be said that there are now several hospitals equal to this in every essential, while there are others its superior in location and architectural convenience.

way, each having sufficient and regulated ventilation from the roof, with separate ventilation for each bed, — while kitchens, dining-rooms, commissary department, and laundry are grouped in appropriate buildings behind. I do not know how to describe what I saw, and you would be likely to think I have no very just idea of the significance of language were I to undertake to give you my impression on entering the first pavilion. Ranged on each side, separated by no narrow passage-way, at a commodious distance from each other, were beds, each with its clean muslin mosquito-net over it, and white coverlet upon it. Everything was exquisitely neat. Men were reading or conversing, — those out of bed, — the matronly nurse about her duties, and everything was bright and cheerful. It seemed a very paradise for invalids. The surgeon, Dr. Bliss, of Michigan, has a genius for his work, and, with no other help than the ordinary hospital fund, — a fund available to every hospital surgeon, — by economy, executive tact, and zeal, he has managed to place this hospital at the head; and I am assured that, when any one falls below this standard, it is from a want of such qualities as I have just enumerated as characterizing Dr. Bliss. The Steward, into whose ample and admirable storerooms we were taken, and regaled with crackers, cheese, and ale, as specimens of what the convalescing had, seemed likewise just the man for the place. The kitchen and the laundry, in each of which were busy hands, proved that there was no show part to this admirable establishment, but that all the way through system, order, neatness, a kind and hearty spirit, pervaded the place.

I would say here, that I feel quite sure that the assertions often made, to the discouragement of many, that nothing in these hospitals is ever washed, but after once using all things are thrown away, is false. In this admirable laundry were some twenty busy hands, while the piles of clean assorted sheets, shirts, pillow-cases, and bandages refuted the statement, so far as this hospital was concerned. I took particular

pains to look into the linen rooms everywhere, and invariably found evidence satisfactory of the fidelity with which this branch of the service is administered. So let me say, in passing, was it with the stores, and though there have been instances of peculation, as there are in the best-regulated establishments, all the world over, fidelity to trust imposed is, I think, the *law* through all grades of this service. Is it not just that we should judge this service by its *law*, not as we so persistently do by its *exception?*

The hospital in Judiciary Square has the opportunity of being even a better hospital than this. The building is constructed after the most approved French plans, modified by Mr. Olmstead. There was a lack of the neatness, the something *homish*, I had noticed in the other; but the men seemed all comfortable and happy. I saw a young boy of seventeen, walking about the central hall, who had just had a bullet taken out of the back part of his head. He used to insist that there was a bullet there, — he knew there was, because when he shook his head *he could feel it rattle.* The doctors were sceptical, but at last consented to examine. The bullet was found, and, if the boy is to be believed, the rattling has ceased.

I give these merely as samples of the hospitals now to be found in or near all our larger cities. I think no unprejudiced person can go through them, who, whatever he might still find wanting, or be able himself to suggest, will not confess his satisfaction with the efforts made by government and its servants to ameliorate the condition of the wounded and sick of our armies.

II. *Of Charities peculiar to our War.*

"*The New England Rooms,*" as they are generally called, under the charge of Colonel Howe, originated with a few New England men of New York, then became a State, then a New England, and now a Union institution. You would say at first, that, however thoughtful and needed the charity, a common Broadway store, near Wall Street, would be no

place to carry it out. Look into it, and you will soon change your mind. The lower story is still used as a store; the second, third, fourth, and fifth are devoted to the various purposes of the relief. In the fifth is the kitchen, allowing no odors to trouble the air in the building; the third and fourth are the sleeping-rooms and hospital wards; while the second is for the office and the general assembly-room of the waiting or convalescing soldiers. There are two hundred beds here. Here the sick arriving in steamboats or on cars, by day or night, those too ill to follow their regiments, those discharged or awaiting discharge, are taken in and tenderly cared for, rested, healed, or nursed till death comes. The rooms are quiet, the ventilation perfect by means of an elliptical well running from floor to sky-light, the surgeon kind and a gentleman; volunteer lady nurses cheer and serve the sick, while anything the city can afford is at the beck of the capricious appetite of the convalescent. It is the sick soldier's hotel, and Colonel Howe knows how to keep it. It has been an instrument of untold good, and the blessing of many ready to perish rests on it. There is no flinching before red tape, no hesitation in setting military tardiness and routine at naught, if suffering humanity be in the way, while there is patience and courtesy and help for the meanest soldier, whatever his want. All this, too, as of necessity, under an admirable though simple system. I had promised a poor woman, who had heard of her husband the first time in four months, and who only knew he was in some hospital near New York, having been a prisoner at Richmond, and sick with the scurvy, that I would look him up. I asked at the Rooms if they could give me a clew. They turned over book after book, in which the names and all facts concerning their most transient inmates are recorded, and reported my man at a hospital thirty miles below New York, where I afterward found him.

Next to this — approaching Washington I mean, not next in the sense of less, either in interest or usefulness — is the

world-known "*Cooper's-Shop*" at Philadelphia,—a veritable cooper's-shop, in which, within a year, 87,513 hungry and weary soldiers have been fed and refreshed. A friend took me to it about nine o'clock of a drizzly Sunday evening. It stands quite open to the street, with low-studded, white-washed walls, adorned with various prints and testimonials of grateful officers and soldiers, with tables running along one side, smoking coppers of hot coffee always ready, and a wealth of ham and bread. A thousand men had been fed there since six o'clock, yet every plate and cup was clean, the tables reset, the floor swept, and the large-hearted and large-bodied cooper, with his as large-hearted and equally large-bodied wife, sat waiting for any stray squads who might come in by any of the railways that night; for, come they singly or by regiments, at any hour of the night or day, they are sure of shelter and food and a welcome. "Ah, you are from Massachusetts," said the latter, as she shook my hand; "we always love to have the New England troops come, they are so well behaved, seem so grateful, and always have something pleasant to say. I can't say so much for some of the New York regiments." They had had a Maine regiment that afternoon, and some nice speaking, with great quiet. The cooper showed us the part of the shop he still retained for his work. "It does the poor boys good to come and sit here and smoke their pipes, and see me work," he said. For you must know the cooper has a hospital as well, up-stairs, where his ingenuity shines as brightly as his charity below. There are twenty-eight beds, and the floor has a nice light-colored canvas carpet, bath-rooms, water-closet, a fever ward, and all you could find in a first-class hospital; and you forget that this is but the garret over a cooper's shop, and the no-arrangement of rooms and bare rafters become fresh charms to the place. "Do you not find the men getting homesick?" I said, as I noticed a number who had been left behind by their regiments. "Yes, at first," was the answer; "but pretty soon they become very unwilling to go." And

I could hardly wonder, and felt what a boon it must be to sick and weary soldiers to fall into the keeping of such hosts as these. And all this because the cooper could not bear to see hungry and dirty and weary and sick soldiers go by. Now, the Cooper's-Shop is a corporate institution, receiving and spending some $13,000 per year; but the cooper is the presiding genius still.

Not far from here is "*The Union*," — a similar establishment, — larger, more elaborately furnished, which has spent more money and fed more men. Everything was very nice here also, but it did not take hold of my feelings as the other; and when I was told that it was in some sort an opposition, my heart turned all the more warmly back to the cooper.

At Baltimore the same thing again is done. I saw a regiment at breakfast there. The food is good and abundant, the welcome hearty, the charity noble; but the place is not inviting, and my memory turned fondly still to the cooper.

At Washington, growing out of a little effort of one of our ministers, Rev. F. N. Knapp, and through the persistence of the Sanitary Commission, is a large establishment, "*The Soldiers' Retreat*," for the reception and comparative comfort of the thousands who are daily passing into that great army in which a regiment is soon as undistinguishable as a drop is in the ocean. Mr. Knapp told me he had frequently seen men, fresh from home, lying on the damp, low grounds near the depot, through the damp nights, with nothing over them but their blankets. The officers ridiculed — while they themselves revelled at Willard's — any attempt to change this, saying it was just as well the men should get broken into their hardships at once. Now there are kitchens, storehouses, a bakery, and dining-halls, where a thousand men can stand and eat, and other halls where a regiment can lie, on the floor it is true, but protected from the outer damp, and are made tolerably comfortable while waiting orders or transport. I came upon a regiment just dining there, and can testify, by

my own tasting, to the excellent quality of the rations provided. Near, is "*The Soldiers' Home*," where the sick, if any, may go and stay till able to join their regiment, where the sick going home may rest, where the discharged soldier — a being outside the poor charity of government — may go, however diseased or loathsome, be washed, clothed, comforted, kept, and sent on his way rejoicing. This consists of several portable houses, with bunks ranged as in barracks, and a nice three-story house used as a hospital, — and a nice hospital too, with a right pleasant Down-East matron. Two hundred can be accommodated here. An ambulance, allowed by government, is always at hand. I think this about the sweetest charity of all, because it is where such charity is most needed, and quietly covers over some gross short-comings of government.

I had not dreamed of the vastness and the perfectness of organization and detail of that body of which we all have heard so much, and so many have doubted, myself among the number, — "*The Sanitary Commission.*" As the grain of mustard-seed expands from the smallest among seeds to be the greatest among trees, so has this small thought in one brain expanded into the vastest beneficence for the sheltering of all ills. Time would fail me to speak of it even as I saw it. The simplicity and quiet with which a vast amount of complicated work is done, the patience with which every case is heard, the wisdom with which remedies are applied, the system which stoops to detail and grasps great thoughts and develops vast plans, the firmness with which a desired reform is pushed, the courtesy and the gentlemanly hospitality of those at the head-quarters, all impress you with a sense of the solid worth of the institution, and the real good it does. My friend took me to and through the storehouses. These are a series of large brick government stables, which, being possessed of in part temporarily, the Commission have proceeded to occupy wholly, and to hold, though wanted by government for their original purpose. They are capitally

adapted to their wants. Here are immense piles of boxes of assorted goods, all labelled, so that almost in the dark, at an instant's notice, whatever is demanded can be had. Every night a list is made of the numbers of each article remaining in store, and it is curious to compare one day with another, and see the fluctuations of demand and supply, — to see how this great storehouse of a nation's liberality, which some men think wellnigh bursting with plethora, is sometimes reduced to a barrenness that would be ludicrous (if it should not prove embarrassing) in one's own domestic arrangements. You cannot make a plethora here, and so long as the war lasts this must be the great reservoir of our charity, only to be fed by the constant running in of the little driblets from individuals, neighborhoods, and families.

The Commission has now the confidence of government, which it has fairly earned. It has had a hard fight against the prejudice of military caste; it is thwarted still, but it pushes on, and is not merely making a success, but working a conviction in the minds of men ever immovable except under the imperative logic of facts accomplished. The Surgeon-General, whom it elevated into power, rewards it by a constant respect and increase of its prerogative. A few days before I was in Washington, a prominent army officer, accompanied by a friend of the navy, called at the rooms of the Commission, and said: "I wish, in this presence, to retract my opposition, and take back what I have said. I thought your scheme a humbug, and you a set of impracticable philanthropists; but I am confident that in my command alone you saved five hundred lives." After the battle of Antietam, the Surgeon-General made a request for stores. "How will you send them?" "By our own wagons." The general doubted, sent government supplies by rail, and the Commission wagons came into Frederick forty-eight hours in advance. It is impossible, in face of such facts, to over-estimate the value of such a body, or our duty toward it.

I come home satisfied that in no way can so much be done

for the wants of the army, as by continuing to supply the Sanitary Commission with such things as they ask. Except in rare cases, all other charity is useless, falls short of its purpose, and is wasted. I do not doubt the sincerity of young men's societies, Christian commissions, State relief societies, and all such. I do not doubt, as things are, that there is work enough for all, and that the hearty work of all can remove scarce a tithe of the want and suffering which must increase as we go; but I do regret the springing up of these separate organizations, distracting people's minds, diverting their charities, and preventing the perfect success of one grand central agency already long in the field, with vast and trained ability and resource, with knowledge and means only acquired by experience, and having facilities which government will grant to no other body. It is scattering where we need concentration, repeating here what has been our blunder in the field. A dozen of these newer agencies, at their best, cannot do what this great power might easily, through united and hearty co-operation. The Commission is national, not sectarian or sectional. Its charity is not suggested, swayed, or limited by State or denominational lines; and I repeat the words of a wounded officer, who said to me: "You can't say too much of it, or do too much for it. It is only those who have seen it as I have, who really know its work and worth."

General Burnside told me that he had every reason to speak well of the Commission, that it had followed and served him faithfully, wherever he had been; and a member of my own family, a surgeon in active service with the Army of the Potomac, from the opening of the war, declares the Commission to be the only satisfactory and reliable assistant on the field, — that he has only to make his want known, and if it cannot be immediately supplied, he knows that it will be so soon as it is possible.

It is the desire of the Commission to be the almoner of the charity of the nation to the suffering of the nation. Their

hope is to make their work a means of union among the loyal States. Any candid person will see that at this crisis there is need of this. We want something to bind more surely in one the separate States of the North and West. We have heard mutterings and threats of future disunion, and we know that our present trouble, if not caused, is aggravated, by alienations between sections and States. The Commission sees and seizes the opportunity — let me call it providential — of checking any growing tendency to this by its system of charity, knowing no State limit, working for the broad, best good of the whole. I know there are many who have most interest and most faith in their own charities, and would send to this and that hospital, this or that regiment in which their acquaintances or friends are. They prefer to work for and distribute to those of their own State. They want to know to whom their charities go, and have a craving for direct and personal acknowledgment. I shall not say that this is not natural, nor that such charity is not noble and blessed. But let me ask you to think again about it. Let me give you no fancy sketch, but the fact as it has again and again occurred. An agent of a State society — say Massachusetts — enters a hospital, and inquires for the soldiers of his own State. He passes down between the long double line of earnest faces, attracted not only by the coming of a stranger, but by the evident fact that he has with him some of those "good things" craved by them, as a sick man only craves. He stops by the side of a sick man of one of his own regiments, and begins to bring out his store. On each side of him lie men as sick, as needy, as craving, the sickly longing for some of these very things, which has pursued them even into their dreams, wrought up almost to madness now by their actual presence. But these poor fellows have the crime or misfortune of being from Iowa and Ohio; they do not belong to the same State with our good Samaritan. He cares for his own, and passes on, having helped, blessed, cheered one man, perhaps; but what shall

we say of the effect produced upon the others? What, after all, is the quality of that charity?

And the evil does not stop there. The men of Iowa and Ohio go home, and they carry the sense of this injustice with them. It is simply impossible that their States should take care of them in this manner. They are too far from the scene of action; their population is scattered; they have neither the means nor the facilities of transport. The war presses on them as it does not on us. God has made the East rich. He is pouring without stint into our coffers in the very midst of this devastating war. We are able, and we ought to be willing, to be his almoners to all our less-favored sister States. We ought not to work for, think of, give only to our own, lest by and by that which we think our glory shall become our shame, and history shall tell of us, — They gave nobly to their own, but they had no broad charity for those of other States who did and sacrificed as much.

I beg you to understand that I am not, and am not anxious to be, the eulogist or the apologist of the Sanitary Commission. I am not, and never have been, in any way connected with it. I do not declare it perfect, — it does not claim to be. I do not doubt it fails in some things, — makes mistakes sometimes. I do not suppose it reaches all or can reach all; nor do I suppose it within the limits of human possibility that every case should be reached exactly in the way we should prefer by any amount of agencies that could be devised. There are a great many complaints against it which are utterly unfounded, while much of the suspicion it lies under arises from the fact that very few understand its place, what it professes to do, what are the limits of its power, and they persistently crowd on to the Commission every wrong or blunder or short-coming that may be found in the administration of hospital charities, or may be reported, — oftentimes ignorantly, oftentimes falsely, too often malignantly. The Commission was not established as a charitable

agency. Its purpose was quite another. It found itself forced to this work. A necessity was upon it to take up this mighty task, and it did not hesitate; and unborn generations will bless its wisdom and fidelity. It is simply an advisory body. It has, strictly speaking, no power. It may suggest, not order. It has no nurses, and nothing to do with nurses. It has some agents, male and female, and other servants of different grades; but it is represented very little in hospitals by these, and always only under United States authority. No supplies are given out except in answer to requisitions from surgeons in charge of hospitals, or on the field. There is very little chance, therefore, for it to sin in the ways asserted. The evils complained of — where they are proved — must lie, for the most part, somewhere among the host of surgeons, nurses, and attendants who are in the employ of government. Let, however, the worst be true that has been said against this body, — it is exceedingly unjust and ungenerous in us to sit at home, and, because of a now and then misappropriation or failure, pick flaws in, and throw discredit on, a work which, in inception and execution, is without a parallel in human history.

III. One word with regard to the men in the hospitals. I saw them in every stage, from the man just drawing his last breath to the man with his discharge or his furlough. I did not hear a complaint. I saw quiet, patient suffering, some sad faces; but they were not faces of murmurers or discouraged. I heard not a word against the war. There were no croakers or Copperheads in the hospitals. I heard words of deepest gratitude, of anxiety to get into service again. Some said they would n't have believed they could find such treatment among strangers, and only one poor fellow, with a sort of half-homesick tone, asked if the Massachusetts boys were not to be allowed to go home on furlough. The wounded seemed invariably cheerful. I remember one man showed me the stump of his leg, with all the pride with which a young girl would show you her doll. Others spoke of the

elegant way in which the wounded limb was healing. A young fellow lay in his bed asleep, about nine o'clock, one evening. The surgeon in charge had been telling us of an operation performed two or three hours before. A percussion ball had been taken from his arm, where it had lain seven weeks, and he helpless in bed that time. The bullet was like a Minié, but had been loaded with percussion powder, so that when it struck the bone it exploded, looking much as a kernel of corn when it is popped. Of course that was an ugly wound, and they had waited for the bullet to work itself toward the surface. While we were examining the ball, — which the surgeon had taken out of his pocket, turning down the clothes and turning up the gas for that purpose, — some one asked to what regiment he belonged; and as no one could answer, he half turned, and with a smile said, "I guess I can answer that question." Now that man had been waked needlessly out of his first refreshing sleep for weeks, and afterward told me it was the first time in seven weeks he had been able to turn ever so little toward his wounded side. I give this as an instance of the almost miraculous good-nature and cheerfulness of these poor sufferers. In the Judiciary Hospital was a man who had both eyes shot out. They said he was the life of the place, persisted in going out alone to see Washington, and had learned to play the fiddle, never having touched the instrument before. I don't know what it is that buoys these men, who are to carry through life maimed bodies, who know they must in a degree be hereafter, not helpers of others, but themselves pensioners upon the charities of others. It must be some beneficent compensation of the ever-compensating God.

I heard but a single cross word, and that was when a surgeon, needlessly as I thought, laid bare a peculiar wound he wished me to see. The nurse turned to me, and said that fellow was always cross. Some men said to me, what was quite evident, that they were better off than they could be at home, — did not wish to go home; and many and warm were

the words of gratitude I heard. Human nature, however, I found to be largely represented in hospital wards. Some were utterly indifferent, some seemed annoyed by a stranger's entrance, some would just answer your questions, while others made you glad by their hearty acceptance of your sympathy, and many faces looked up from pillows wistfully, as if they wished it was them you were to speak to. One thing I noted, that the men who had really suffered refused to speak of what they had gone through.

The great deficiency in the hospital arrangements seemed to be in the case of the convalescents. The men in bed, sick or wounded, were all well cared for; but the convalescents suffer from two things, — want of proper diet and want of proper occupation. The army ration for the hospital while the man is in bed is well enough, but there has been no just provision for the man getting well. It was intended to remedy this by the establishment of a convalescent camp, in a location of rare beauty, upon a hill, some two miles out of Alexandria. You have all heard enough of that. Thank God, "*Camp Misery*" is one of the things that were. There were said to be twenty thousand men here at the time I visited it. It seemed to be a sort of pen, into which all who could limp, all deserters and stragglers, were driven promiscuously. It was one of the saddest sights of my life, that long procession of weak and wasted men, intermingled with stalwart cowa and mean deserters, as it wended its way, under guard, from the wharf, out of town, up the hill. Let alone all other things, association with such characters would mar the pleasure, if not retard the recovery, of an honest convalescent.

The convalescent ought specially to be the subject of home thought and care. Something should be done to relieve him from the terrible *ennui* which devours him, which affords the opportunity for evil even while the man would not, — opportunity which must fearfully increase as winter shuts him wholly within doors. I find that the memory of the conva-

lescent is more painful to me than that of the wounded and sick. And one way of helping the convalescent is to supply him with some simple means of employment. Said a fine-looking fellow, as he hung upon his cruteh, "Sir, if I can only keep my mind occupied, I can do very well." It is occupation these men want, and we ought to furnish the means. Our Yankees cannot sit with their hands before them; they cannot always be writing or reading or talking. Idleness is going to be the same curse in the hospital that it is elsewhere, and I could see the same old busy Devil devising mischief for idle hands. I saw tossing coppers, for instance, the inevitable beginning of gambling, not in any gambling spirit, but simply for want of something to do. In my own way, from the beginning, I have done what I could for the leisure hours of the soldier, and have sent over ten thousand games, — footballs, checkers, gammon, chess, dominoes, cribbage, solitaire, puzzles, beside knives, tools, and jewsharps, to camp and hospital, — and know I have done good so. In one instance, a single checker-board, sent a young parishioner and handed to him just as he went on board a transport, furnished the only relaxation on a crowded ship for days. I think this is worthy every one's thought. I was surprised, at passing through hospitals in our cities, to see that this had not attracted the thought of the rich and the wise. Just what the convalescing man is at home, is he in the hospital; just what he needs here, he needs there, only does he want them a thousand times more.

The great injustice of government is toward the discharged soldiers. The government has no bowels of mercy for them. They are turned adrift, with their pay, it is true, but with no claim on the government, to find their way home or to die. I fell in with one poor fellow, — by all right he should have been in his coffin, — journeying alone from Fortress Monroe to the centre of New York. He was of the Ohio Fourth, but his father lived in some small town on the line of the Central Railway. He said to me, "You know, sir, when we boys

get into trouble, we always think of our father's house." I stayed by him, and did what I could. He was exquisitely patient, unselfish, and grateful; all his sufferings, he said, were nothing to what our fathers endured. I tried to get him to rest one night at Colonel Howe's, but his answer showed his feeling, — showed what treatment he had had from some officials, — "I have got washed and cleaned, and all my soldier things off, and I don't want to go nigh any of them again." He blessed me at parting, and said, "If I live, I will write to you; and if I die, I will get some one to do it." Poor fellow! I fear his brave heart was still before he could tell to whom he wished to write.

In connection with this I must relate an incident that occurred as we landed at New York. I had proposed a variety of plans, by some one of which I trusted that my poor friend would get a good night's rest. To all of them there was on his part some objection; and finding by inquiry that he could go up the river that night, and reach his father's door before noon of the morrow, he determined to go at once from the boat to the cars. I had intended remaining by him, but I was under a promise to a poor woman, which would take me in an entirely opposite direction; and finding the remainder of the journey so straight, and so short in time, I concluded to leave him, believing he would find other friends on the road. Calling a policeman on the wharf, I explained to him that I had with me a sick soldier, and was anxious to find an honest hackman to take him to the Hudson Railway. After a moment's thought, he beckoned a man from the crowd; and I was just stating the case, when the soldier broke in, "Could you carry me to the Hudson Railway for a quarter?" You who have any knowledge of New York hackmen will know how my heart sunk at those words. "I 'll carry you for nothing," was the quick, hearty reply. "It won't do me any harm, and I shall be the happier man for it"; and, forgetting all about other fares, he snatched the valise from my hand, took my patient under the arm, tenderly lifted him

into the carriage, and drove away, to leave me to learn that even in the breast of a New York hackman there is a genuine humanity, which only needs the right kind of touch to wake it into beauty and life.

I have thus attempted to put before you the results of some little inquiry as to our hospitals and soldiers, and their condition, and wants in them. I sum up thus. The hospitals are not yet perfect, but honest men are trying to make them so. The Sanitary Commission is worthy your confidence. It furnishes the only sure medium of your charity. It can only live and do as you afford it the means. It is straightened to-day because our charity is divided. There is as much need of our charity and liberality as ever. Let it not be that, because of sectional or sectarian doubts or jealousies, a noble institution, nobly founded, thus far nobly sustained, shall be crippled in its means of usefulness, or add another to the long and dark catalogue of good things sacrificed to the petty or pettish spirit of bigotry or captiousness. Let us work heartily, let us give freely; work and give in faith and hope and unity, that when at last this war is over, and its history comes to be written, brighter than all the valiant deeds that may be blazoned on its pages shall be the chronicle of its charities, linking in one the loyalty of the East and the loyalty of the West, — charities that shall show the world the power of HOME, through her dear love to mitigate, if she cannot prevent, the sufferings of the camp and the hospital!